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Reflexions of a Sociologist.

INTRODUCTION.

I wish to be of some use to my fellowmen: and feel a temptation to put down here the thoughts that arise in me. I claim to be a Sociologist because I feel and seek to labour for the betterment of my race. My Reflexions portray me, my studies, my observations and my experiences. Reader, take me, with all my imperfections if you please.

THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE.

Bound by the law of substance—of the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy—the universe, as a whole, appears to us to be eternal. And Astronomy tells us that the more it pierces into the wide heavens the more worlds break upon its vision. In fact, it is driven to exclaim in wonder that the universe is boundless.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HUMAN MIND.

If life is the outcome of the co-operation and reciprocal action of chemical and physical forces: Mind is the child of the functional activities of the bodily organs. From the electron to the protist, from the protist to the amoeba, from the amoeba to the ape, and from the ape to the orator or the philosopher—natural evolution has had an unbroken career.

GOD.

All the ecstasies and aspirations of the soul—all the dreams and hopes of a fuller, fairer life—constitute our God. And could there be a god higher and grander ?

THE SOUL.

I deny the existence of a soul substratum : but I assert the existence of the feeling, thiking, aspiring soul—mind.

IMMORTALITY.

The faculties and powers—the soul—of man perish at death with the particles that compose his body. But the law of causation cannot be suspended. Our thoughts and deeds live on in all the countless tendencies and forces that are to be. Our predecessors live in us and we die only to live in those that succeed us.

THE BASIS OF RELIGION.

It is Humanity that has begot us, that has nursed us, that has trained and educated us, and that has given us all the riches and joys of life. Are we not in duty bound to consecrate this life, however humble and unknown, for the health and happiness of our race ? To revere and love and strive to realize this ethical ideal in life is to be truly pious.

THE BASIS OF ETHICS.

No fear of an angry god, no threat of an everlasting hell and no promise of an eternal heaven, makes a man just and true. But make him think and feel what anguish, what misery and what suffering he brings to another by his selfish crimes : and make him think and feel what joys and riches he produces for another by his just and generous acts. We shall so broadbase ethics on the higher feelings of man. With the refinement of human feelings there will be less of selfishness and more of love and justice—more of sociality, of morality.

THE HERO.

The loveliest picture in the world is that which represents a hero who is brave enough to stand against a world, rich enough to have fortune under his feet, and glorious enough to want nothing from others.

PLAIN LIVING.

A work congenial and useful : rice and curry just enough for hunger : clothes and shoes just enough for body : a cottage just enough for shelter : a small provision just enough for contingencies —are quite enough for man's short journey on earth.

A WISH.

If I could see the Almighty I would shout to Him at the top of my voice : O, please make me a nameless, friendless, moneyless philosopher, rather than make me a high placed bandit, a gigantic land-shark, a swollen money-king.

THE MEAN.

In plenitude of love, a wiseman lets an unfortunate wretch take as much delight as possible from speaking ill of him. To speak or hear ill of others affords great pleasure to a mean fellow. Vultures prefer to feed upon carrion, because it is in their nature to be dirty, and they prefer it to clean meat.

CRIMES.

All crimes are but mistakes. And all mistakes are due to ignorance of our relation to the Universe, of the Laws of Nature. With the disappearance of this ignorance, all vices, all crimes, all mistakes vanish.

TRUE TO NATURE.

If I err, let me say so. If I correct my error, let me be content with the correction. Let me not trouble myself about how I seem to others. I live in others as others live in me. If I am sane and robust, that must suffice me.

A STURDY MANHOOD.

With thought to foresee and to provide for the changes and chances of life, with prudence to avoid unnecessary evil, with a nobility to be uncompromisingly just, to part with all, to lose all, if need be, with a magnanimity to understand and sympathise with the wants and ways of men and women, with a courage to rise superior to the malignant lies and the mischievous pranks of our fellows, with a generosity to forget and forgive personal wrongs,

with a will to dare and defy a world for the principle that is in us, and with a supreme joy to play with the passing concerns of life as though they were things of indifference—we attain a rich and sturdy manhood.

THE MAJESTY OF THE BRAVE MAN.

It is wisdom to fortify yourself against the worst that your brother-men may do unto you. They can at worst beggar you, defame you, torture you, and cast you out. What is there that is intolerable in all this? The intolerable cannot exist in the very nature of things. The intolerable puts an end to itself. You live because things are tolerable enough to let you live. Want, infamy and pain cannot go beyond death. Death puts a finish to them all. When want and torture go beyond endurance, Nature, in her providence, puts out the sensations. People may outcast you, your person: but who can cast out the force and beauty of your thoughts and deeds from the memory of those who have come under their influence? No shame can disfigure a brave and thoughtful soul. All the fires of the *auto-da-fe* cannot consume one brave thought. The man may go: the thought lives. A brave man is a brave thought. Knights may go: Knightliness remains. Thinkers may go: thought remains. If you are robust enough, you can joyously laugh at neglect and infamy. The brave man is too great for rewards and penalties: gifts cannot tempt him: gibbets cannot terrify him. The world is too small for his thought. Neither fire nor sword can touch him. Neither shame nor honour can reach him. He is high above the world, like a God. By his side all the hosts of money-kings and Society gods look pitiably small. He lives and loves and labours not for the plaudits of a showy world but for the satisfaction of his own soul. If he does not *seem* fair to a passing crowd: he is supremely content that he *is* rich and fair in his own eyes.

A. S. MUDALIAR.

Image Worship.

Christian Missionaries from the west regard the idol worship of the Hindus as based on ignorance and superstition. They have not ceased hurling upon them thunderbolts of criticism since their advent to the sacred land of India for the propagation of the gospel of Christ. Devoid of any knowledge of the Sacred Hindu scriptures which enforce idol worship on sound metaphysical principles, they are labouring under the misconception of Hindu method of worship though western scholars of high Oriental repute have honestly expressed their appreciation of their form of worship. For divers other reasons, they hold that image should form an indispensable nucleus in the adoration of the Supreme. But the Christians persist in their denunciations of the Hindu religion with a view of obliterating it from the face of India and for which they are imported to this country. They at the sacrifice of their homely comforts have emerged forth from the land of antipodes to proclaim the good tidings in this land of Bharata Bhumi wherefrom wise men learned in the scriptures tempt the deep ocean to convey the wonderful message of Vedanta. Has it escaped their (Christians') vision that India is the birth place of religions from which other religions of the world sprang. Max Muller the distinguished Oriental Scholar in his lecture to the Civil Service Students at the University of Oxford, on the subject of "what can India teach us," sounds the trumpet note that for everything in science, religion, philosophy we must with veneration look to India.

It is strange to observe that the Christians with the co-operation of a few converted Indians, have attempted to foist upon the fundamental principles of Hindu worship peculiar and unwarranted construction which is calculated to dispel the authentic view so far strictly entertained by them. Their ceaseless efforts have been to implant the christian worship in this land of religions.

A learned Christian lecturer of the west after a careful and critical study of the oriental mind says that the Eastern mind is

tenacious of its inheritances and that their watchword is faith. It is laudable that an honest christian has exposed an honest interpretation of the Indian religion.

The Hindus profess a faith as ancient as the Vedas and they are fast bound to this established and thoroughly tried faith that it would be considered a sacrilege to meddle with it, with the ultimate object of supplanting a religion incompatible with and contrary to their tenets of old.

The potent argument often urged by the Christians is to the effect that Christianity wakes men from the torpor of barbarism and infuses into their minds new principles of thought unknown and unheard of. It raises them from the depth of ignorance to the height of knowledge. In the west, Christianity is said to have played an immense part in perfecting states and principalities and it cannot be disputed that it did influence and not surprisingly because the materialistic ideas that are now inundating the Western Societies act as a bar to the growth and advancement of christianity in a miraculous manner. It cannot therefore be conceived that Christianity is the only civilising and nationalising religion on the face of the globe and no state reaches the zenith of its power except through the influence of Christianity. The moral precepts and doctrines that compose a religion are the only necessary elements for moulding up nations and individuals.

I shall now divide the subject into 3 different sections.

(1) the absolute necessity of imageworship

(2) the potent effect it produces on the minds of the worshippers

(3) devoted attachment leads to the ultimate goal.

Firstly the images are absolutely necessary for innocent and untutored minds which cannot form an abstract idea of Godhead. Lord Macaulay confirms the view that the illiterate require object forms for intuitive perceptions and they could hardly conceive things in their real shape without a mental picture being presented to them. In dark ages men were like small children that things were percieved in their particular aspect because their mental susceptibilities were in an incipient and undeveloped stage that they

were able to take hold of a particular object. In civilised countries where science and philosophy have shaped thier minds for wider perceptions of things, they are enabled to form an abstract idea of God. From particular ideas, the general idea is formed. That is the order of succession conceiving things in their particular shape is more easy and well adapted to the mind than in a generalised form which bewilders the ordinary mind.

Image worship is the stepping stone which will finally lead to the realisation of the unknowable. We read in Hindu Books, that God assumed human shape to emancipate mankind from the tyranny of sin. The images that are now worshipped by the Hindus have been modelled after that fashion. This antiquated form of worship has a firmer and more palpable hold over them than the kind of worship now current in civilized countries. Materialism has taken the place of spiritualism and holds its sway in civilized societies.

Secondly the impression of the image in its concrete form upon the unlettered minds of the worshippers becomes firmly fixed and produces a wonderful transformation in them, assuredly atmosphere of holiness pervades over them and their mind solely thinks of the image—the (human) representation of the Godhead. Whenever they enter a holy shrine, their very presence within the abode of the Holy One makes them holy and draws them in closer union with the Divine. As a testimony to the wonderful impression the symbol of Godhead has effected on them, a river of tears roll down their cheeks stealthily and they are no longer merged in the meshes and thorns of the world. Many a *sick* stricken soul in its pathetic appeal to the image where the Divine energy concentrates itself, has found peace and rest.

Thirdly devoted attachment to the symbolic representation of the one invisible finally leads to the ultimate goal, the fountain of eternal bliss. There is no religion higher than truth and in our religion the divine truth has been revealed to many earnestly seeking devotees who are still found in thousands in the holy plains of Chidambaram and other famous shrines. Thus witnessing the mysterious workings of the Great One, we should not allow ourselves

to be exercised by the enticing words of Christianity—a religion as exotic and unsuitable to our soil. But implicit and unflinching faith with profound respect for traditions will not only crown our efforts with unbounded success, but will preserve the prestige of a great national religion.

Manikkavasakar and other great Saints, of whom we read in the Puranas as having flourished during the 14th century, were idol worshippers, but their firm and unswerving attachment to the religion they have embraced, held them in direct communion with God and in the ripeness they were absorbed in complete union with Him. The holy utterances that fell from their lips in praise and glorification of the Godhead stand as living and speaking witness of this aryan religion.

There is indeed but few poems in any language that can surpass Tiruvasakam or the holy word of Manikkavasakar in profundity of thought, in earnestness of purpose or in that simple childlike trust in which the struggling human soul, with its burdens of intellectual and moral puzzles finally finds its shelter. What characterises India is her religious ferment and intense thirst for knowledge. She possesses in an extraordinary degree all the possible materials to train up the spiritual side of man for the final emancipation from this mundane existence. Let us therefore pray that our religion, a religion of religions may thrive and be a living religion.

"Be good at the depths of you, and you will discover that those who surround you will be good even to the same depths."
—*Maeterlinck.*

Personality of God According to Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy.

By Mr. J. M. NALLASWAMI PILLAI, B.A., B.L.

It will be interesting to note that it was about 12 years ago we brought out our first work in English on the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy from Tirupattur, and we have continued to work hard at it ever since, and our translations of Sivagnanabodham, Sivagnana-siddhiar, Tiruvarutpayan, along with our contributions to the *Siddhanta Deepika*, during the last ten years, and Dr. G. U. Pope's Tiruvachakam form the only bibliography on the subject in English. And we are glad to note that, within the last few years, considerable interest in the subject has been awakened, and several European missionaries have made a special study of the subject, and have discussed it before missionary societies and in the public press. We quote the latest opinion from the Christian College Magazine, Vol. XX, 9, from the pen of Rev. W. Goudie.

"There is no school of thought and no system of faith or worship that comes to us with anything like the claims of the Saiva Siddhanta."

"This system possesses the merits of great antiquity. In the religious world, the Saiva system is heir to all that is most ancient in South India; it is a religion of the Tamil people, by the side of which every other form is of comparatively foreign origin."

"In the largeness of its following, as well as in regard to the antiquity of some of its elements, the Saiva Siddhanta is, beyond any other form, the religion of the Tamil people and ought to be studied by all Tamil missionaries."

"We have, however, left the greatest distinction of this system till the last. As a system of religious thought, as an expression of faith and life, the Saiva Siddhanta is by far the best that South India possesses. Indeed, it would not be rash to include the whole of India, and to maintain that, judged by its instrinsic merits, the Saiva Siddhanta represents the high water mark of Indian thought and Indian life, apart, of course, from the influences of Christian Evangel."

And we had remarked in our introductiou to 'Tiruvarutpayan or 'Light of Grace:' "And there can be no doubt that we have in these works the brightest and largest gems picked out from the diamond mines of the Sanskrit Vedantic works, washed and polished and arranged in the most beautiful and symmetrical way in the diadem of Indian thought."

Through want of active propaganda, by means of lectures and conferences, the subject is not properly brought to the notice of the English-educated public, and appreciated by them, as it deserves to be ; and we are therefore much obliged to the editor for being allowed to contribute a paper on the subject.

Despite the opinion of a few European and Indian scholars, who would trace Saiva Siddhanta to a purely South Indian source, we have all along been holding that Saiva Siddhanta is nothing but the ancient Hinduism in its purest and noblest aspects ; and it is not a new religion nor a new philosophy, and it can be traced from the earlist Vedas and Upanishads. We do not hear of any one introducing Saivism at any time into India, and the majority of Hindus have remained Saivites from before the days of the Mahabharata.

The ideal of the Highest God has, from the beginning, been centred round the person of Rudra or Siva, and in the Rig Veda we find Him described as the" Lord of Sacrifices and Prayers," and we find this maintained, in the days of Valmiki, when beliefs in other deities were slowly gaining grouud.

Consistently with this position in the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda declares that; "Ther is only one Rudra, They don't allow a second," ,Eka-eva-Rudro Nadvitiyaya thasteh,' (ptkanda 8.6.10). "He who is one is called Rudra," "Ya Eko Rudra Uchyati." And St. Tirumular declares accordingly "ஒன்றவன்றானே," "தான் என்னும் சித்தாந்தம்." "God is only one." "Siddhanta declares there is God alone without a second."

The first mantra, it will be noted, is not so well known as the mantra "Ekamevadvitiyam Brahma," occurring in an Upanishad of the Sama Veda ; and Max Muller has shewn that the use of such words as Rudra, Hara, Siva, to denote the Highest God is much

more earlier than the use of such words as 'Brahman,' 'Atman' and 'Paramatman'; and in fact, these words do not occur in the Rig Veda at all to denote the Highest God. And we may also point out that the word 'Nadvitiyam' occuring in the Yajur Veda is certainly a more ancient and original form of the word than 'advitiyam,' which has been obtained by the elision of the letter 'n'.

And St. Meikandan comments on this mantra in the following verse :—

"ஒன்றென்றது ஒன்றேகாண் ஒன்றேபதி, பசுவாம்
ஒன்றென்றநீ பாசத்தோடுளைகாண்—ஒன்றின்றால்
அக்கரங்களின்றாம் அகரவுயிரின்றேல்
இக்கிரமத்தென்னும் இருக்கு.

"The Vedic text means there is only one Supreme Being without a second. And this one is the Lord. You who say 'there is one', is the Pasu bound up in Pasa. The word 'second-less' means that, beside God, nothing else will exist, as when we say that there will be no other letters (consonants) when the vowel is not."

No consonant sounds can possibly be formed unless the vowel sound is uttered at the same time; and this will justify us in stating that vowel is alone, without a second; and yet the vowel is not the consonant nor the consonant the vowel. When we utter the consonant sound (மெய் எழுத்து or உடல் எழுத்து) the vowel and consonant is linked in a peculiar, inseparable and eternal manner. This is the link or relation between our own human body and the mind (உடல் or மெய் and உயிர்). And from anology we say there is a similar link between God and the world (including souls). And this link or relation is called in the Saiva Siddhahta 'the advaita and the philosophy postulating this peculiar link between God and man is called the 'Advaita Siddhanta philosophy,'

But how does the One link himself to the many, and become the many, and divide himself among the many as it were. St. Tirumular postulates ஒன்றவன்றானே இரண்டு அவன் இன்னருள்." This division of Him is brought about, because He is also Grace or Love. His second is His Sakti. He is one with His Sakti or Love.

அன்பும் சிவமும் இரண்டென்பர் அறிவிலார்
அன்பே சிவமாவதாரு மறிந்திலார்
அன்பேசிவமாவ தாருமறிந்தபின்
அன்பேசிவமா யமர்ந்திருந்தாரே.

"The ignorant say Love and God are different.
None know that Love and God is the same.
When they know that Love and God is the same,
They rest in God as Love."

And accordingly, also, St. Maikandan postulates his second Sutra, in which he declares that God is one and different from the world and souls, as He is one with His Agna-Sakti, which is all Power, all Intelligence, and all Will and all Love. And in the last argument he shows that as God is Pure Intelligence, this oneness or union with the world or omnipresence is possible. If He was not intelligent, but material or Jadam, this cannot be possible.

As such, Sivagnanabotham contains the shortest definition of God as Siva-Sat or Chit-Sat or Sat-Chit. Sat denotes God as pure Being in which aspect He can never reach us; Chit or Arul or Love denotes His aspect in which he can reach us and we can know him. Sat is the Sun, which we can never comprehend. Chit is the Light, one ray of which is enough to remove our darkness and enlighten us; and but for which one ray of light, we can never know the Sun.

All other conceptions of God follow from this essential definition of God as 'Sat Chit' and, if true, must conform to it. If not, they must be rejected as false.

From the fact that He is intelligent, it follows also that God can will and act.

சத்தியின்வடிவேதென்னில் தடையிலாஞானமாகும்,
உய்த்திடுமிச்சைசெய்தி யிவை ஞானத்துளவோவென்னின்
எத்திறஞானமுள்ள தத்திறமிச்சைசெய்தி,
வைத்தலான் மறைப்பின்ஞானன் மருவிடுங்கிரியையெல்லாம்.

"The form of this Sakti is unlimited Intelligence.
If asked whether supreme Will and power are also found in this Intelligence,
We answer yes. Wherever there is intelligence there is will and power,
As such Power and Will will also be manifested by this Chit Sakti."

And He wills to create the worlds and creates them, and resolves them, and reproduces them again and again. He could not do this purposelessly or out of His mere whim and pleasure; and, as we know, He is all love, He could do it only out of such love, to help to lift up the erring and ignorant souls, by giving them their bodies and senses, so that they themselves may will and act, and taste the bitter fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and be chastened and purified by suffering and sorrow, and learn to submit their will to the will of the supreme.

And Kalidasa in his Kumara Sambava declares :—

"No selfish want e'er prompts a deed of mine :
Do not the forms—eight varied forms—I wear
The truth of this to all world declare."

And these eight forms he mentions in his invocation in Sakuntalam.

Isa' preserve you ! He who is revealed,
In these eight forms by man perceptible.—
Water of all creation's works the first ;
The *fire* that bears on high the Sacrifice,
Presented with solemnity to Heaven ;
The *priest* the holy offerer of Gifts ;
The *Sun* and *Moon* those two majestic orbs,
Eternal Marshallers of day and night.
The Subtle *Ether*, vehicle of sound,
Diffused throughout the boundless universe,
The *earth*, by sages called the place of birth,
Of all material essences and things,
And *air* which giveth life to all that breathe "

St. Appar has the following verse :—

இருநிலனாய்த் தீயாகி நீருமாகி
இயமானனா யெறியுங் காற்றுமாகி
அருநிலைய திங்களாய்ஞாயிறாகி
ஆகாசமாயட்ட மூர்த்தியாகிப்
பெருநலமுங்குற்றமும் பெண்ணுமாணும்
பிறருருவும்தம்முருவும் தாமேயாகி
நெருநலையாயின்றாகி நாளையாகி
நிமிர்புன்சடையடிகள் நின்றவாறே.

"As Earth, Fire Air and Ejaman (of sacrifice), as Moon, the Sun and Akas, as *Ashtamurthi*, as goodness and evil, as male and female, himself, the form of every form, as yesterday and to-day and to-morrow, my Lord with the braided hair stands supreme."

St. Manickavachaka has the following verse :—

நிலம்நீர் நெருப்புயிர் நீள்விசும்பு நிலாப்பகலோன்
புலனாயமைந்தனோடு எண்வகையாய்ப் புணர்ந்துநின்றான்
உலகேழெனத்திசை பத்தெனத்தானொருவனுமே
பலவாகிநின்றவாதோ ணோக்கமாடாமோ.

Earth, Water, Air, Fire, Sky, the Sun and Moon ,
The sentient man, these eight forms, He pervades
The seven worlds, Ten quarters, He the *One*
And Many, He stands so, let us sing.

He pervades these eight forms ; they form His eight bodies and hence Siva is called Ashtamurti. By this is established His antaryamitvam or Omnipresence, or Immanence in all nature, as He is Chit. But he is beyond all these forms and beyond all nature and man.

The famous passage in the 7th Brahmana of the 3rd chapter in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad deals with God being immanent in nature and in man.

Beginning with the verse, 'yasya prithivi sareera, &c.'* * He who dwells in the earth, and within or different from the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body (sarira) the earth is, and who rules the earth within, He is thy Atma, the ruler within, the immortal," and giving similar statements regarding water, air, fire, &c.* * it ends with " He who dwells in Vignana (soul) and within or *different* from Vignana, whom Vignana does not know, whose body Vignana is, who rules Vignana within, He is thy Atma, the ruler within, immortal.

That God is different from all nature and man is further brought out by the famous 'Neti, Neti' verse of this same Upanishad (3-9-26) which Paranjoti Munivar translates and expands in the following lines :—

அல்லையீதல்லை யீதெனயன்மைச் சொல்லினாற்றுதித்தி ளைக்குமிச்சுந்திரன்,

> பூதங்கள் அல்ல பொறியல்லவேறு புலனல்லஉள்ளமதியின்
> பேதங்கள் அல்ல இவையன்றிநின்ற பிறிதல்லவென்றுபெருநூல்
> வேதங்கிடந்து தடுமாறு வஞ்சவெளியென்பகூடன்மறுகிற்
> பாதங்கணோவவளை யிந்த னாதிபகர்வாரையாயுமவரே

"'God Sundara who is described as 'not this, not this,"

"The sages declare, He is not the five elements, not the senses nor sensations, nor the andakaranas, nor the soul ;
He is the deceitful 'nothing' which the Vedas fail to discover."

The Supreme is adored as the Creator, Hara : as protector, Samkara ; as destroyer, or producer, Rudra ; and as Bliss-giver, Siva. God is called (எண்குணத்தான்) as possessing eight attributes and they are as follow:—Self-dependence, Purity, Self-knowledge, Omniscience being ever free from Sin, Supreme Graciousness, unlimited Bliss.

Then follow questions whether God should be said to possess form or no form, whether He should be regarded as Saguna or Nirguna Personal or Impersonal, and so on.

In regard to the question of form or no form, the Siddhanta is positive that God is neither Rupi nor Arupi nor Ruparupi. "சிவன் அருவுருவுமல்லன் சித்தினோட சித்துமல்லன்" "God is neither Rupa nor Arupa, neither soul nor matter." It recognises that all Rupa and Arupa are forms only of matter which is objective to our senses, and God can never be objective to us, and cannot possess any of these material forms or bodies. The nature of matter is to limit and God is the illimitable and can never be found by any material forms. Some would say God is Arupi, not realizing that matter is also formless as air, and nothing is gained by calling Him Arupi. The fact to be clearly borne in mind is that God cannot be objective to us, and possess material form.

But if it is pointed out that Saiva Siddhanta religion recognises forms of God and His appearances and acts, it is answered that these forms of His are not materials but are purely spiritual forms formed of His great love and grace, and to be perceived not by the human mind but with the divine grace, 'அவன் அருளாலே அவன்றாள் வணங்கி' St. Arulnanthi says:—

உருமேனி தரித்துக்கொண்ட தென்றலு முருவிறந்த
வருமேனி யதுவுங் கண்டோ மருவுரு வானபோது
திருமேனி யுபயம் பெற்ரும் செப்பிய மூன்றுநந்தம்
கருமேனி கழிக்கவந்த கருவினையின் வடிவுகாணே.

"All these forms of His are assumed out of His supreme grace for destroying our evil bodies." And how this is possible is shown in the following:—

"As He does not possess the defect as an object of perception, and as He is possessed of absolute intelligence and power, as He is not possessed of likes and dislikes, the Nirmala God can assume any form out of His grace. And these forms are described in the following verse. His form is Love; His attributes and knowledge are Love. His five functions are Love; His organs like arms, feet &c., and His ornament like the crescent moon, &c., are also Love. These things are assumed by the Nirmala God, not for His own benefit but for the benefit of mankind." With which compare the following verse from the Taitraya Upanishad:—

" His head is surely Love ; joy His right wing; delight
His left,
Bliss is His self, Brahman whereon He rests."

The following beautiful hymn from St. Appar, and the text from the Manduka Upanishad may also be read:—

மைப்படிந்த கண்ணாளும் தானிம் கச்சி
மயானத்தான் வார்சடையான் மாசொன்றில்லான்
ஓம்புடையனல்லன், ஒருவனல்லன்
ஓரூரனல்லன் ஒருவனும் யில்லி
யப்படியான் அவ்வுருவன் அவ்வண்ணத்தன்
அவனருளே கண்ணாரக் காண்பதல்லால்
இப்படியன் இவ்வுருவன் இவ்வண்ணத்தன்
இவனிறைவ னென்றெழுதிக் காட்டொணாதே

"The lord with the braided hair lives in the Kanchi burial ground, with His beautiful Uma with pencilled eyebrows. He has no sin. He is not one of the mortals, and is not to be compared with any of them. He has no place, and is incomparable unless we can with His grace as our eye perceive Him, His form and nature, none can paint Him, in His real form and nature."

This Atma is not attainable by explanation nor yet by mental grasp, nor by hearing many times. *By him whom He chooses*—by him is He obtained. For him, God His proper form reveals. (Manduka-3, 2, 3.) It is to be noted also that the various forms in the temple are mere earthly symbols, necessary in our view for the ordinary human mind to grasp and follow the divine ideals, until the soul has advanced to a very high stage indeed. A missionary friend of ours wrote to say that as regards the use of symbolism, he found it necessary for the educated people, but as regards its salutary effect on the illiterate people, he felt not convinced. This opinion will be found opposed to the common current of opinion on the subject, but yet it is true, in so far as it postulates the necessity of the use of symbols even as regards highly educated people.

And we regard the various conceptions of God, as He, she and it, as also conceptions derived from material forms, and as such not appertaining to His real essence, but the forms are necessary for our own easy conception of God:

"பெண்ணாணலியாகிப் பிறங்கொலிசேர், மண்ணாகி விண்ணாகி யித்தனையின்
பெண்ணாணலியெனும் பெற்றியன் போற்றி

> "He is male, female and neuter, earth and heaven and none of these."
>
> "Praise be to Him who is female and male and neuter."

Further, the words Saguna and Nirguna are usually translated as personal and impersonal, and we have often pointed out how vaguely and loosely these words are used, and protested against translation. We will first consider the words Saguna and Nirguna. It literally means "with guna," and "without guna." One school of people would interpret it as meaning 'with *good* qualities,' and 'without *bad* qualities,' and that this is absurd is seen from the fact that the two words are made to mean the same thing. The word 'Guna,' however, does not mean any good or bad quality, but is a technical word as used by the Sankhya and Vedanta schools and as occurring in the Upanishads, Gita, etc. It means the three gunas, Satva, Rajas, Tamas, the qualities of Prakriti or Pradhana or matter; and as such the words would mean 'with *material qualities*' or 'without *material qualities*.' St. Tirumular uses the phrase

'முக்குண நிற்குணம் mukkuna-nirgunam,' so that no mistake may be made of the word Nirgunam itself.

சாத்திகமேயது நனவெனச் சாற்றுங்கால்
வாய்த்த விராசத மன்னுங்கனவென
ஒய்த்திடும் தாமத முற்ற சுழுத்தியாம்
மாய்த்திடும் நிர்க்குண மாசில் துரியமே.

So also the Gita speaks of 'Thraigunyo Nirgunaha,' and it stands to reason that God cannot be 'Saguna,' clothed in matter or material qualities, and must be therefore non-material, Nirguna. The Supreme God is, therefore, described in the Upanishads and Gita and Sivagnanabotham as Nirguna and not as Saguna, as in the following passages :—

' This one God is hid in every bhuta pervading all, the inner *Atma* of every *atma*, Inspector of all deeds (spectator) in whom everything dwells (supporter), the witness, the pure Intelligence and Nirguna Being; the Iswara of Iswaras, the Maheswara, the God Supreme of Gods, the king of kings, the supreme of supreme, the 'Isa' of the universe. (Svetas) 'Beginningless, Nirguna, Paramatman, Imperishable, though seated in the body, O Kaunteya worketh nor is soiled (Gita 13-31.)—Note Ramanujah explains Nirguna as destitute of satva and other qualities.

" Will not the Lord, who is *Nirguna*, Nirmala, Eternal Happiness, Tatparam (transcending all things) and beyond comparison and appears to the soul when it gets rid of its *tatvas* such as akas, etc. Will not He appear as a far transcending wonder and an inseparable light of its understanding." (Sivagnanabotham ix. 2. a) But certain deities are stated to be Saguna, as being clothed with pure Satva or Rajasa or Tamasa, and they should not be confounded with the Turiya murti or the Fourth, the chaturtha, the supreme Brahman ; these Saguna beings are merely certain souls from among Sakalars wielding very high powers and possessing still material bodies.

" Shantam shivam advaitam *chaturtham*" Ramatapini up.

The word Nirguna is the same as the word 'gunatita,' 'beyond guna or matter.' The word, therefore, implies non-material and therefore pure chit. Christian missionaries need not, therefore, shy at this word, and they should certainly drop the word 'Saguna,'

which technically means material. From the passages quoted above, especially from the verse from Sivagnanabotham, it will be seen that God is called 'Nirguna,' 'Intelligence and Rationality and Consciousness,' not denied to Him. This is made further clear in the following verses from St. Maikandan and St. Tirumular.

> ஏகமாய் நின்றே யிறையடிகள் ஒன்றுணரப்
> போகமாய் தான்விளைந்த பொற்பினன்—ஏகமாய்
> உள்ளத்தின் கண்ணானான் உள்குவா ருள்கிற்றை
> உள்ளத்தாற் காணானோ வுற்று.

When the soul becoming one with God and feels Him, He becomes the Supreme Bliss as God becomes one with the soul. So understanding Him, will he not know ? with the soul what is understood by the soul."

> நானறிந் தன்றே யிருக்கின்ற தீசனை
> வானறிந்தார் அறியாது மயங்கினர்
> ஊனறிந் துன்னே உயிர்க்கின்ற வொண்சுடர்
> தானறியான் பின்னை யாரறிவாரே.

That day I knew my God, the same was not understood by the Gods. The bright effulgence lighting the *inside* of my soul and body, it is said does not know! Who else can know ?

Of course, it is also said in these works that God 'cannot know' 'உதியாமரியா உணராமறவா' and it is pointed out by Sivagnana Swamigal in his Dravida Maha Bashya that this only means that God's consciousness is not like the consciousness of the individual man, which is limited, and cannot become conscious unless it forgets, and can only understand in relation (change is essential to consciousness—Bain). This human consciousness is called சுட்டுணர்வு. God does not possess this limited சுட்டுணர்வு. His consciousness is what transcends all limitation and all relation and is absolute, as in His Akundakara, there is no distinction of this and that, there is nothing out of Him 'போக்கிலன் வரவிலன்.'

Coming to the question of God being personal or impersonal, we are not quite sure in what sense our Indian writers use these words, but they mostly take it as meaning Saguna and Nirguna. There is some difference of opinion as regards the connotation of the word among European writers. Some use it as implying individuality and limitation; others use it as not meaning individuality

and this is the more prevalent and cultured opinion. We take the following definitions from a vocabulary of Philosophy.

Person : A being intelligent and free, every spiritual and moral agent, every cause which is in possession of responsibility and consciousness, is a person. In this sense, God considered as a creating cause is a *person*.

" The intimate relation of God, as Being, to all His attributes and to all his essence, constitutes the divine *personality* ; which for God is His entire Being. God only exists for Himself, in a manner infinite and absolute. God has relation entirely to Himself ; for there is no being out of Him to which he can have relation is altogether internal. The divine consciousness or personality embraces all that is in God, all of which He is the reason. ' Person as applied to Deity, expresses the definite and certain truth that *God is a living being*, and not a dead material energy.'

Emerson says that personality signifies true being (Sat) both concrete and spiritual. It alone is original being. It is not limited. It is that universal element that pervades every human soul and which is at once its continent and fount of being. Distinction from others and limitation by them results from individuality. (Ahankara or Anava) not personality (Sat.) Personality pertains to the substance of the soul, and individuality to its form. Another Christian writer (Rev. J. Iverach) points out that the absolute and unconditioned Being is *Personal* is not a contradiction in terms, such as a round square, but that it will be true as when we say a white or crimson square. " When we speak of the absolute, we speak of it as a predicate of pure being ; we simply mean that the absolute Personal Being is and must be self-consciousness ; rational and ethical, must answer to the idea of spirit. Why may not the absolute Being be self-conscious? To deny this to Him would be to deny to Him one of the perfections which even finite beings can possess."

St. Meikanda and St. Tirumular had stated the same question long ago, as we had shown. This self-consciousness, இயற்கை புணர்வினளுதல், and முற்றுமுணர்தல், as we have shown above, is not to be confounded with the limited சுட்டுணர்வு of the soul.

As it is, personality clearly means Sat and Chit. And neither Saguna nor Nirguna. Personality is opposed to Achit or Jada or irrational matter and relates to the substance. Saguna and Nirguna to the form, either as individual or otherwise—God can never become individualised as man, woman or brute, the limitation of the latter class of beings arising from its union with matter or Guna (Saguna). From this view, impersonal would clearly mean irrational, unintelligent and material, and we don't believe any Indian writer would desire to use this word in relation to the Deity, if they only understood its signification.

From the statement that God is Nirguna and not Saguna, it follows that God can neither have birth nor death. This is one of the central doctrines of Saiva Siddhanta, and in this respect it differs from all the existing forms of faith, whether Hindu or otherwise, except, perhaps, Muhammadanism and the Unitarian form of Christianity.

பிறப்பிலி பிஞ்ஞகன் பேரரு ளாளன்
இறப்பிலி யாவர்க்கு மின்ப மருளும்
துறப்பிலி தன்னைத் தொழுமின் தொழுதால்
மறப்பிலி மாயா விருத்தமு மாமே.

The unborn, with the braided hair, supreme grace, the undying, bestowing bliss on all, O thou worship! If worshipped, thy Maya will vanish without doubt.

Of course, it must stand to reason that our soul itself is neither born nor can it die. What is born or what dies is the material body formed of Mayā or Guna. These repeated births and deaths occur on account of the peculiar link subsisting between the soul and matter; and therefore, the souls comprising all Sakalars are called Saguna. The same peculiar link does not subsist between God and matter, and hence, He is Nirguna. So it is. God can neither be born in the womb nor die. This peculiar doctrine of Saiva Siddhanta is what should elevate it to the highest rank of philosophy; and the latest discoveries in science could not shake its foundation.

One other feature of Saiva Siddhanta, in regard to the Godhead, we will mention, before we close this paper. And that is, that

the supreme Brahman of this school called Siva or Sivam is not to be confounded with the Hindu Trinity. God is peculiarly denoted by the words Sivam, Sankara, Sambhu, Rudra (he who removes sorrow) as they express the most spiritual nature of God as Love and all-beneficent. And that this is no sectarian conception of the Deity and that the God of the Saiva Siddhantis is the universal God of all the nations and all religions is finally brought out by St. Arulnanthi Siva Chariar in his very first verse in Sivagnana Siddhiar.

அறுவகைச் சமயத்தோர்க்கும் அவ்வவர்பொருளாய் வேறுங்
குறியது முடைத்தாய் வேதாகமங்களின் குறியிறந்தங்
கறிவினி லருளான் மன்னியம்மையோ டப்பனாகிச்
செறிவொழியாது நின்ற சிவனடி சென்னிவைப்பாம்.

Let me place on my head, the feet of Siva who stands as the goal of each of the six forms of religion, and who stands in the various forms conceived of by the various internal schools of Siva faith, and yet stands beyond the conception of all Vedas and Agamas, and fills all intelligences with His love, and becomes my Heavenly Father and Mother and fills one and all inseparably.

To sum up, according to true Vedanta Siddhanta Philosophy, God is Sat, Chit, Ananda, not material nor enveloped in matter, Nirguna and Personal, ever blissful and all Love and all His acts such as creation, &c., are prompted by such Love. He is neither He, she or it, nor has He any material Rupa or Arupa, and He can reveal His grace and majesty to those who love Him. He cannot be born nor can He die and as such, indeed, He is the Pure and Absolute and Infinite Being able to lift up humanity wallowing in the bonds of mala, maya, and karma. To know Him as our true Heavenly Father and Mother and love Him as such is the only panacea for all the evils of erring mankind.—*The New Reformer*.

To them that love God all things work together for good.

The soul cannot be hurt but though thy erring body.

The Inner Meaning of Siva Linga.

(*Continued from page 32 of Vol. VIII.*)

Thus the Linga being Nada partakes of the nature of *உயிர்* and the Peeta being Bindu partakes of the nature of *மெய்*. The relation between linga and peeta is exactly the same as that between *உயிர் எழுத்து* and *மெய்யெழுத்து*? What is the relation between the *உயிர்எழுத்து* and *மெய்யெழுத்து*. Tholkappiar, that sage who flourished 7000 years before Panini describes this in the Sutras '*மெய்யினியக்கம் அகரமொடு சிவணும்* and *மெய்யின் வழியதுயிர்தோன்று நிலையே*' and Nachinarkiniyar, the commentator, likens this to the undifferentiated condition of salt and water, and of finger and finger. Observes he "*முன்னின்ற சூத்திரத்தான் மெய்முன்னர் நிற்ப உயிர் பின் வந்தேறுமென்றார் அம்முறையே யோசையும் பிறக்குமென்றார் இதனால் மாத்திரைக்கொள்ளுங்கால் உப்பு நீரும் போல வொன்றேயாய் நிற்றலும், வேறுபடுத்துங்கால் விரலும் விரலுஞ்சேர நின்றாற்போல வேறாய் நிற்றலும் பெற்றாம்.*"

The vowel has 1 matra and the consonant has half matra. The vowel and the consonant both combined should have $1 + \frac{1}{2}$ or $1\frac{1}{2}$ matras. But the matra actually obtained is only one—not 'one and a half.' Hence the commentator says '*மாத்திரைக்கொண்டாங்கால் ஒன்றேயாய் நிற்றலும்.*'

The matra for *அ* is one and matra for *க* is also one, though *க்* (the consonant) has half mahtra. But has the vowel become the consonant? Yes in a sense it has become the consonant and yet remains distinct as the *அ* in *க* remains distinct from *க்*. This is the relation of God and Soul in mukthi. This is the view of the author of the Vedantha Sutras when he says that God alone has the power of creation and not the soul, who can only enjoy Divine Bliss. "Bhoga matra Samya Lingath" (the 4th pada) *உம்பர்பிரான் உற்பத்தியாதிகளுக்குரியன் உயிர்தானும் சிவானுபவம் ஒன்றினுக்கே யுரித்து* (Siddhiar.)

This is the view of the Upanishads when they proclaim "that a person intent on the dulcet sounds of a vina hears nothing but the sound of Vina" etc. This is also the view of the Gitacharya when he says "such a man never dies in me." Such an advaitic* union is proclaimed by the union of Linga and peeta or of Nada and Bindu or of உயிர் and மெய். We said that Nada has its sound and Bindu produces shape. 'Nada (sound) produces Bindu (shape)' is a scientifically demonstrable truth. So every sound is represented in a shape. The first distinct sound is only அ or Akahra. The next sound is only இ ikahram and the next sound is only உ ukahram. Of course we leave the long vowels out of consideration. The அ + இ is எ and அ + உ is ஒ. The sequence or order is in the formation of sounds. But where is the order in the pronunciation of the characters A, B, C, D, or in Aliph. Be, Se, The ? In pronouncing our Hindu letters, we give them certain shapes. These shapes are formed as we pronounce them. Thus the shape of அ or A is what is formed in the pronunciation of the sound அ. So is இ and so is உ. Of course the characters of the present day alphabet are not what Tholkappiar gives in his immortal Grammar. The Sivagamas assert that from the bottom of the evolving Bindu tatva Ambika Sakthi is produced, from her issue three sakthies Vama, Jyeshta and Rowdri. Vamah is of the form of a slumbering serpent. Jyeshta is dandakara or a line. Rowdri has the shape of two horns ெள (or brackets)—(கொம்பு). A combination of these Sakthies produces the letter Akahara or the primary sound. In Akahra Rowdri Sakthi is the head, Vamah the face, Ambika the hands, Jyeshta the long body. Of course the Bindu and Nada are the tatvas, out of which these 3 kalahs of Pranava are formed. Thus according to the Agamas, every alphabet, vowel or consonant, is formed out of one or more of the Nava Sakthis, Vama, Jyesta etc., that evolve out of Bindu and Nada, the Bindu being a dot or a star or zero and the Nada being a line. The Pranava which comprises within itself the entire alphabets of 51 letters is the only letter in which the entire 9 sakthis conjointly play their part in producing its shape. Kalidasa thus describes the truth "Vyomethi Bindurithi Nadaithi Indurekha roopethi Vakbhava thanoorithi Mathruketh Nishyandamahna sukhabodha Sudhaswaroopam Vidyothase Manasi Bhagyavatham Jananam." The Vyoma is the sky or Akas. The Bindu is the Star, the Nada is the form of linear lightning: the

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* Saint Arulnandisivam defines Advaitam as "ஒன்றாய் நின்றவன்னிலையில் ஒன்றாகாமலிரண்டாகாமல் ஒன்றுமிரண்டு மின்றாகாமல்" (இருபா இருபஃது.)

Indurekha is the various shapes of the waxing and waning moon, the Vakbhava thanu is the body produced out of the Vaks (speech) Vaikari Madhyama, Pasyanthi, Sookshma and Su-Sookshma which are but products of Kutila or Kundalini which is a compound of A, U, M, Bindu and Nada. Of these 5 Vaks the Susookshma is Gnanaroopa and the Sookshma is the originator of the 3 Vaks Pasyanthi, Madhyama and Vaikari. The pasyanthi is Nirvikalpa (changeless) and Madhyama is Savikalpa (changing) and Vaikari is Srothra Vishaya or the audible sound.

Vaikari is the grossest and it is caused by the udana Vayu and Prana Vayu. The Madhyama Vak is not audible. It rests in the throat but still the Will cognizes it. It is generated by the Prana Vayu and not by the Udana. The Pasyanthi Vak is an undifferentiated condition of the various sounds or rather their substratum. These 5 kalahs (subtle) guide the 5 sthoola kalahs Nivruthi, Prathishta Vidya, Santhi and Santhiatheetha. There is thus here an attempt, to connect the heavenly regions with the inner organisms of the human body. A link is forged between astronomy and physiology both of them finally merging in the Divine Philosophy of Oneness. The Agama says "Siva Sthithassarvajanthoonam Aksharanam Akahravath" Just as the letter (sound) அ (A) stands among the letters (sounds), so Siva stands with reference to all the souls. In the Devara hymn the immanence of the Lord is described as இழைக்குமெழுத்துக்குயிரேயொத்தியால், just as the vowel induces the consonant; and sage Thiruvalluvar says அகரமுதலவெழுத்தெல்லா மாதி பகவன்முதற்றேயுலகு and says the sage Thayumanavar அவ்வுயிர் போலெவ்வுயிருமாகி.

The above explanations are necessary in view of the fact that the Pranava is the chief or Tharaka Mantra the efficacy of whose dhyana is so gloriously described in all the upanishads and Agamas. We alluded to the Tamil alphabets in as much as the vowels and consonants therein are characterised உயிர் and மெய் and as the phonetic order is complete there, for instance there are short எ and ஒ but in Sanskrit we have only long ஏ and long ஓ and we cannot conceive of long ஏ and long ஓ without the short எ and short ஒ, just as we cannot have a long ஆ without the short அ. In other respects the rules mentioned in the Panini's grammar may equally apply. Thus it is clear that all the shapes of the sounds have their origin from the Divine Kutila whose Kalahs are the nine Sakthis that they are derived only from the Nada and Bindu which constitute the Ardha mahtra of the Pranava. This Ardha matra is the entire Siva linga, the peeta representing the Bindu and the Linga

the Nada. In the succeeding pages we will describe how the Sivalinga is the shape or Yanthra of the sound Pranava. Only when we understand the relation between the Linga and Peeta or the உயிர் and உடல் or the vowels and consonants, we can have a conception of the Pranava Linga being characterised as the symbol of the Divinity. Else mere assertion that the Pranava is all and that the Linga is all will be a conundrum.

The same sacred books current in the South and in the North describe the Prabha or திருவாசி of the divine forms and the shapes of Ganesa and Linga as pranava. We see no actual difference in the shapes of Ganesa and Linga as sculptured in the North and South. The long story of Ganesa as the offspring of two pranava kunjaras (elephant) Siva and Sakthi (Nada and Bindu) is found in the Skandapurana. Of course any northern edition of the same māy be compared with that in the south. The Agamas give lucid explanations of the shapes of Alphabets from A to Ha. The 51 Aksharas are the forms of Rudras. These Aksharas are the seeds of the Lotus of Kutila. "Panchasath rudra roopasthu—Panchasath Bija garbhitham," so say the Agama and the Vayu Samhitha. We are told in the Santhana Agama that these Agamas were taught in the mutts that were once situated on the banks of the Ganges. These mutts were known by the names of Mandahnakahlisa in the middle and Ahmardakee, Golaki, Ranabhadra and Pushpagiri on the 4 sides. This shows that the alphabet as it prevailed in the South was also extent in the north for a long time and that the men in the North lost them with the influx of time and subject to tho influence of various marauding nations such as the Greeks, the Scythians, the Huns, the Mughals and Afghans etc, as at the present day they are fast losing the pronunciation and nay the very language itself.

Anyhow we see that the Nada and Bindu form part and parcel of the Holy Pranava. These two constitute Ardhamatra. The Siva Dharmottara says "Athavahnya Prakahrena Brahma Vishnu Mahesvara kramath Mahthra Samuddhistah Tathparaschah rdhamahtrayah" and the Vayu Samhitha says "Evam Thisrubhire vaithath Mahthrabhirakhilam Tridha Abhidaya Sivathmahnam Bhodhayathyardha mahthraya" Thus the Ardhamatra is above the three matras A, U and M The Atharva Sikha explicitly speaks of Ardhamatra and its connection with Nada. The 27th chapter of the second part of Vayu Samhitha treats of this Atharva sikha and the rising of the Mahalinga.

The Chapter begins thus.

" Evameva vivadobhooth Brahma Vishnoparasparam
Thasyordarpahpaharahya prabodhayacha Devayoh
Madhye samahbhirabhavath Lingam Aisvaram Adbhutham
Jvahlah mahla Sahasrahdyam Apregneyam Anoupamam
Kshaya Vriddhi Vinirmuktham Adi Madyanta Varjitham
Thasya Jvahla Sahasrene Brahma Vishnoo Vimohithou."

Brahma and Vishnu began to fight. To put down their pride and to elighten them, a grand lingam arose amidst them, a wonderful lingam symbolising Isvara, shining with thousands of fiery beams, an immeasurable, and unrivalled form void of decay and growth, as well as beginning, middle and end. Brahma and Vishnu were quite stunned with the multitudes of fiery-beams.

"Pranipathya Kimahthmedam ithyaohinthayatham Tada
Athabhirabhavath thathra Sa nahdam Sabda lakshanam
Omithyekaksharam Brahma Brahmanaea prathipahdakam
Tadapyavidithamabhavath Chathurdheikam Thadaksharam
A-u-m ethi thrimathrabhihi parasthachchardha mahtraya
Thathrahkahro Sritho bhage thada lingasya Dakshine
Ukahraschothare Tadvan Makahrasthasya Madhyathaha
Ardhamahtrahthmako Nahdaha Srooyathe Linga Moordhani
Vibhakthepi thatha Thasmin Pranave Paramakshare
Vibhagarthamcha Thou Devow nakimchith avajagmathuhu
Vedathmana thadavyaktho Pranavo Vikruthim gathaha
Thathrakaro Rik abhavath Ukahro yajuravyayaha
Makahrassahma sanjahtho Nahdasthvatharvanee Sruthihi."

Then they prostrated before it and began to muse about its nature. But they could not. Then the Mantra, the one Akshara, Omkara, which depicts the Supreme Brahm, with Nada, the primary essence of sound, took shape. That too was not understood by Brahma and Vishnu, their minds being overpowered by Rajas and Tamas. Then that word divided itself into 4 divisions, viz., A, U, M, and the Ardhamatra beyond them. Then the Matra leant towards the right side of the Linga, U leant towards the left side, while M leant towards the middle. The Nada which is called Ardhamatra, went to the top of the Linga. Even when this Great Word Pranava thus divided itself, still they could not understand. Then the Pranava changed itself into Veda. A became Rik, U became Yajus, and M became Sama. the Nada became the Atharvana:

Rik upasthapayamasa Samasathvartham Atmanaha
Rajo Guneshu Brahmahnam Moorthishvahdyam Kriyasvapi
Srishtim lokeshu Prithvim Tathveshvahthmanam Avyayam
Kalahdavani nivruthimcha sadyam Brahmasupanchasu
Linga bhageshvado bhagam Beejakhyamkahrana Thraye
Chathush shashti Gunaisvaryam Bowdhdham yathanimhdishu
Taditham Arthair Dasabhir Vyaptham Visvam Richa jagath,"

Then Rik stood up and began to dwell upon its import in brief. Of the gunas Rajas; among moorthis Brahma; of actions creation; of worlds earth; of tatvas Atma tatva; of Kalahdvas Nivruthi; of 5 mantras sadyojatha mantra; of the portions of Linga the bottom; of the 3 causes the seed; of the Anima and other prosperities 64 prosperities which pertain to Buddhi; in this manner by means of these ten kinds, the Rik pervades the universe."

"Athopasthapayahmasa Swartham Dasa Vidham Yajuhu
Satvam guneshu Vishnumcha Moorthishvadyam Kriyasvapi
Sthithim lokeshvanthariksham Vidyam thathveshucha thrishu
Kalahdhvasucha Pratishtamcha Vahmam Brahmasu Panchasu
Madhyanthu Linga Bhageshu yonimcha Thrishu Hethushu
Prahkruthamcha thathaisvaryam Thasmath Visvam yajurmayam."

Then the Yajus established its own ten kinds. Of Gunas Satva; of Moorthis Vishnu, of action Sthithi or Protection; of worlds the Anthariksha; of tatvas Vidya tatva; of kaladhvas Pratishta; of the 5 mantras Vamadeva mantra; of the Linga portions the middle part of the three causes the yoni (uterus); of the prosperities the prosperities which pertain to Prakruthi; in this way the universe is Yajurmaya."

"Thathopasthapayahmasa Samahrtham Dasadhathmanaha
Tamo guneshvatho Rudram Moorthim Adyam kriyasucha
Samhruthim Thrishu lokeshu Swargam Tatveshvatha Sivaha
Vidya kalahsvaghoramcha Brahma Brahmasu panchasu
Lingabhageshu Peetordhvam Beejinam kahranathraye
Powrushamcha thathaisvaryam itham Sahmnah thatham jagath."

Then stood up the Sama-veda and dwelt upon its own ten divisions. Of gunas Thamas; of Moorthis Rudra; of actions Samhara (dissolution); of worlds Swarga; of tatvas Siva tatva; of kalahs Vidya kala; of 5 mantras the Aghora mantra; of the portions of Linga the upper part of the Peeta; of the three causes the Beeji (the man); of the prosperities the prosperities of Purusha tatva; Thus the Sama Veda pervades this universe.

Atharvaha nairgunyam artham paramam Atmanaha
Thatho Mahesvaram Sakshan Moorthishvapi Sadasivam
Kriyasu Nishkriyasyapi Sivasya paramahthmanaha
Bhoothanugrahanamchaiva muchyanthe yena janthavaha
Lokeshvapi yatho Vacho nivrutha manasah saha
Tadhoordhvam unmana lokahth Soma lokamalowkikam
Somas sahomayah yathra Nithyam nivasatheisvaraha

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Tadhoordhvam unmanalokath yampraptho na nivarthathe·
Santhimcha Santhyatheethamcha Vyapikam Vaikalasvapi
Tathpurusham thathesanam Brahma Brahmasu panchasu
Moordhanamapi lingasya nada bhageshvanuthamam
Yathravahya samahradhyaha Kevalo Nishkalas sivaha
Tathveshvapi Thada Bindor Nadath Sakthesthathahapara
Thathvath Api param Tathvam Athathvam paramarthathaha
Karaneshu thrayatheethahth Mahyah Viskshobha kahranahth
Ananthath Suddha Vidyayah parasthathcha Mahesvarahth
Sarva vidyesvarahdeesath saparasthathcha Sadasivath
Sarva Mantra Thanor Devath Sakthitraya samanvithath
Pancha vakthrahddasabujahth Sahkshath sakala nishkelath
Tasmath Apiparahth Bindor Ardhendoscha Tathaha parahth
Tathparath Nirodheesath Nahdahkhyathcha thatha parahth
Tathahaparath sushumnesahth Brahma randresvaradapi
Tathaparasyahssakthescha parasthath siva thathvathaha
Paramam kahranam Sahkshath Swayam Nishkahranam sivam
Kahranahnahmcha Dhathram Dhyahtharam Dhyeyam avyayam
Paramahkahsa madhyastham Paramathmoparisthitham
Sarvaisvaryena sampannam Sarvesvaram Aneesvaram
Aisvaryaschapi Mahyeyath Asuddhath manushadikhath
Aparacha paraththyajyath Avisuddhadhvagocharath
Tath parahth suddha vidyadyahunmanahnthath Parathparath
Paramam paramaisvaryam unmanadya manadicha
Apahramaparahdinam nissahmyahthisayam sthiram
Itham Arthairdasa vidhairiyamahtharvanee sruthihi
Yasmath Gareeyasee thasmath visvam vyaptham Atharvanah."

Then the Atharva Veda dwelt upon its own import. Nirguna (of gunas); of Moorthis Mahesvara and Sadasiva; of actions of the Paramatma, Siva who is void of any action (nishkriyah) the Anugraha (Blessing) function by which all souls are liberated, among Lokas (worlds) the Somaloka where the Lord with Uma ever rests, the abode without reaching which the speech along with the Mind has returned, which is (therefore) beyoud the Unmana loka, reaching which one will never return; of Kalas the Santhi, Santhi Atheetha and Vyapika, of the 5 mantras the tathpurusha and Isana Mantras; of the portions in the Linga the top of the Linga which is the portion for Nada where the Lord Siva who is simply Nishkalah is to be contemplated; of the tatvas, that Tatva which transcends the Bindu, Nada and kutila and beyond that tatvam which is really no tatva; of the causes, itself transcending the three causes being simply the agitator of Maya, transcending Anantha and the Suddhavidya, transcending the Mahesvara, the Lord of all Vidyesvaras, transcending even Sadasiva, whose body is formed simply of Mantras, in whom rests the three Sakthis Icha, Gnana and Kriya, who has five heads and ten hands who is the Sakala-nishkala transcending Bindu, Ardha-chandra, nirodi, Nada and Nadantha, transcending sushumnesa and Brahmarandresa, transcending even the Sakthi tatva and Siva tatva,

He is himself the causeless cause, Sivam, the grand cause, the resort of all causes, the unifier of all causes and the one to be contemplated upon, the Lord in the midst of chidakasa, the Lord transcending all Atmas; (of prosperities) possessing all aishvaryas (omniscience and other 7 qualities) being Sarvesvara and having no Isvara for Him, transcending the prosperities of Asuddha Maya the prosperities of men, transcending the lower prosperities and all the higher prosperities of Suddhadhvas, transcending the prosperities of Suddhavidya and anmana, which possess the beginningless Aishvaryas which are limitless, the like of which cannot be found anywhere, the transcendental aishvaryas which "are ever existent" Thus the Atharva demonstrated its ten divisions by which it pervades the universe."

Rig Vedaha punarahedam jahgrath roopam mayochyathe
Yenahamatmathathvasya nithyamasmyabhidhayakaha
Yajur Vedövadath thathvath Svapnahvastha mayochyathe
Bhogyahthmana parinathah VidyahVidyah yatho mayi
Sahmachahá sushupthyakhyam evam sarvam máyochyathe
Mamahrthena sivenedam Thahmasena bhideeyathe
Atharvahaha Thureeyahkhyam Thureeyatheetha mevacha
Mayahbhideeyathe thasmath Adhyahtheetha padosmyaham
Adhvathmakamtha Thrimalam Siva Vidyahthma Samjnitham
Thathraigunyam Thrayeesahdyam samsodhyamcha padaishinaham
Adhvatheetham Thureeyahkhyam Nirvahnam paramam padam
Tadatheethamcha Nairgunyath Adhvanosya Visodhakam
Dvayo Pramapako nado Nahdahnthascha madahthmakaha
Thasmahn mamahrthas swahthanthryath Pradhana Paramesvaraha
Yadasthi Vasthu Thath sarvam guna Prahdhanya yogathaha
Samastham Vyasthamapicha Pranavahrtham prachakshathe
Sarvartha Vachakam Thasmath Ekam Brahmaitha daksharam
Thenomithi jagath kritsnam kuruthe Prathamam sivaha
Sivo va Pranavohiesha Pranavo va siva smruthaha
Vahchya Vachakayorbhedo nahthyantham Vidyathe kvachith

Again Rig Veda Says: "By me is denoted the waking state. I am therefore the appellation for ever of Atma tatva. Similarly the Yajur Veda Says "By me is denoted the Swapna avastha (dreaming state), as the Vidya tatva which transforms itself into Bhogya (things consumable) rests in me; The Sama Says "By me is announced the state of Sushupthi and this is explained by the Siva tatva." The Atharva Veda says. "I announce the state of Turiya and Turiyathita. Therefore I am the condition that transcends all adhvas. The three bold divisions of Atma, Vidya and Siva tatvas, which are the regions of the three malas (Anava, Karma, and Maya), comprise all Adhvas in them. They are of Three Gunas, capable of being accomplished by (a knowledge of) the Trayee (Rik, Yajus and Sama) and capable of being tested or purified by the persons desirous of padas (berths). The state of Turiya which transcends the Adhvas is the blissful great condition (of the mukta.) Being void of Thrigunas it is further beyond and is the purifier of

adhvas. The Nada is the lintk that connects both i.e. the adhva and the state beyond and Nadantha is my own sphere. Therefore my state which is independent is preeminently supreme. Whatever substance there is in the world, that substance by the conjunction of gunas proclaims the meaning of Pranava either in its entirety or separateness. Therefore the Akshara (character) and one Mantra OM is designatory or explanatory of all things. Therefore the Lord Siva creates the entire world by uttering the word 'Om." Siva is Pranava and Pranava is Siva. There is not much difference between a definition and a thing defined.

Arthametham Avijnahya rajasubhaddha Vyrayo
Yuvayo Prathibodhaye Madhye Lingam Upasthitham
Evam Omithi Mahm Prahuryadihokthamatharvanah
Rucho yajoomshi samani sakhaschanyassahasra saha
Vedeshvevam Svayam Vakthraivyakthamithya Vadathsvapi
Swapnanubhoothamivathath thabhyahm nadhyava seeyatha
Thayosthathra Prabodhaya Thamoparayanayacha
Lingepi Mudritham Sarvam yatha Vedairudabrutham
Thaddhrustva Mudritham Linge Prasadath Linginasthada
Prasantha manasow Devow prabuddhow sambabhoovathu
Thatho lingasya Lingathvam Linginopicha Lingitham
Linge Visvasya jagathaha Viseshath Swahthmanorapi
Uthpaththim Vilayamchaiva yahthathmyamcha Shadadhvanahm
Thathaha paratharam Dhama Dhahmavanthamcha Poorusham
Nirutharatharam Brahma Nishkalam Sivam Isvaram
Pasu pasa mayasyasya prapanchasya sada pathim

Not knowing this meaning both of you are fighting with each other. For enlightenment of you both this Linga arose in your midst. Therefore the wise denote me by the syllable Om, as Atharvana Veda just now explained to you.

Though the Riks, the Yajus, Samas along with their multitudes of branches spoke with their own mouths, still they did not last for a long time in their minds. All seemed to them like phantoms in dream. Then for their enlightenment and the dispelling of their internal darkness, all the truth proclaimed by the Vedas were engraved or imprinted in the Linga. Seeing the above truth marked in the Linga, by the Grace of the Lord, whose symbol is Linga, the two were enlightened. Hence the Lingathvam, state of being a linga, for the Linga—which means symbol or Mark (அடையாளம்). As the Linga bears the marks of all truths mentioned by the 4 Vedas, i.e. as all the truths are marked or symbolised by this symbol, this is called symbol or Linga. Similarly the lingitha of the Lord who is denoted by the Linga. As the Lord is the resort of all the truths symbolized by the form of the Linga, He is called Lingi—literally one denoted by Linga. This Linga depicts or inculcates the projection or creation of the entire universe composed of pasu (non-material soul) and pasa (material)

as well as their dissolution and of the true condition of the Shaladvahs. Beyond that is the Nishkala of the Lord.

Thus it is clear that the Siva linga is Pranava engraved or sculptured. Siva linga is the yanthra or the shape for Pranava. The Vidyesvara Samhita says:

" Linganamcha kramam Vakshye yathavath Srunutha Dwijaha, Thadeva lingam prathamam Pranavam Sarva kahmikam, Sookshmam Pranava roopamhi Sookshma-roopamthu Nishkalam......Svahasthallikhitham Lingam Suddhapranava manthrakam yanthra lingam samahlikhya Pratishtavahanamchareth, Bindu nadamayam Lingam Sthavaram jangamchayath."

I will now describe the order of the Linga. Listen to it. That alone is the Prime Linga which is Pranava, the fulfiller of all desires. The Pranava form is subtle and this subtle form is Nishkala. The linga written by one's hand is the pure Pranava Mantra. By imprinting the yantra Linga one should perform pratishta etc. This linga of Bindu and Nada is all the mobile and immobile things.

The same Samhita asserts.

"Pranavam Dhvani lingamthu Nada lingam Svayambhuvaha Bindu lingamthu yanthram syahth " and it defines Pranava thus :—

"Akahrascha ukarascha Makahrascha thathahaparam
Bindu nadayutham Taddhi sabdakahla kalahddh yutham

Pranava (sound) is the Nada Linga of the self existent Lord. The Bindu Linga is yanthra or shape of the Pranava and Pranava is formed of A, U, M, and beyond these is the one formed of Bindu and Nada."

Srothumichami yogindra Lingavirbhava lakshanam Pura kalpe Mahakahle Prasanne Loka Visruthe Ayudhyatham Mahahthmahnow Brahmavishnu parasparam Thayormahnam Nirakarthum Than madhye Paramesvaraha. Nishkala sthambha roopena svaroopam Samadarsayath, Thatha sva linga chinnhathvahth Sthambhatho nishkalam Sivaha Svalingam Darsayahmasa Jagatham Hitha Kahmyayah Tadaprabhruthi lokeshu Nishkalam lingam Aisvaram."

Again it says:

Yadidam Nishkalam stambham Mama brahmatva bodhakam Linga Lakshna yukthathvath Mama Lingam Bhaveth idam Lingam Omkara mantrena Beram Panchaksharenatha Svayamevahi Saddravyair Prathishtahpyam Porairapi."

Oh Yogindra, I now desire to hear of the appearance of linga. He says: When Brahma and Vishnu were fighting in former times, for dispelling their delusion the Lord himself appeared before them in the form of a huge pillar, void of parts. As it was marked with His mark it became Linga. For the purpose of doing good to the world, He exhibited his own mark. Thenceforward the Nishkala forms the Divine symbol.

The entire Kailasa Samhita is a treatise on Pranava:

" Akahraschapyukahrotha Makahrascha trayam kramahth. Thisro Mahtras samahkyatha Ardhamahtra thathapram Ardhamahtrah Mahesani Bindu Nada Swaroopinee,

A, then U and M—these three in their order are called the three Mahtras. Beyond these is the Ardhamahtra—oh Mahesani (Parvati) the Bindu and Nada constitute Ardhamahtra.

Akahrasthu Mahathbeejam rajassrashta chathurmukha ukahra Prakruthir yonihi Satvam palayitha Hari Makahra purusho Bijee Tamassamharako Hara Bindur Mahesvaro Devasthirobhava udahrutha Nadassadasiva Proktho Sarvanu grahaka Prabhu Nada moordhani Samchinthya Parahth parathatassivaha.

The letter A is Mahat (mind), Bija (Semen Virile), Rajas Brahma, the creator, the four faced. The letter U is Prakruthi, Yoni (matrix) Satvam, Hari, the sustainer. The letter A is Purusha, Beejee (the agent or Man) Thamas and Hara the destroyer. The Bindu is Mahesvara, Deva, the Thirobhava. The Nada is Sadasiva is the Anugraha-doer. In the Summit of Nada Lord Siva is to be contemplated.

The Samhita gives six interpretations or rather modes of viewing or understanding Pranava. "Manthro yanthram Devatacha Prapancho Gururevacha Sishyascha Shat padarthanam Esham Artham Srunu priye," The six modes are Mantra, Yantra, Devata, Prapancha, Guru and Sishya—Listen to their meanings.

Pancha varna Samashtisyahth Mantra poorvam udahbruthaha Sa eva yanthratham praptho Vakshye than mandala kramam yanthramthu Devatha roopam Devata visvaroopinee Visvaroopo guru proktho Sishyo guru Vapusmruthaha."

The combination of 5 letters is called Mantra. The same obtains a shape or yanthra. I will describe them. The Yanthra or shape is the form of Devata. The Devata is in the world. The Guru is Visvaroopi. The disciple is the body of Guru.

Hridpundareekam Virajam Visokam Visadam Param Astapathram kesaradyam karnikopari Sobhitham. Adhara sakthi mahrabhya Thrithathvanta mayam padam Vichinthya Madhyasthasthasya Daharam Vyoma Bhavayeth Omithyekhaksharam Brahma Vyahharan Mahm Tvayah Saha,

Within the Heart lotus of eight petals shining with Kesaras and Karnika and upon a seat formed of Adharasakti to the end of Atma Vidya and Sivatatvas—the Lord with His Sakthi is to be contemplated by uttering the mantra Om.

Lord Subramanya thus initiates the great Sivadvaithin Vamadeva, who is mentioned in the Aithareya upanishad and in the Brahma soothra "Sastra, Dhrushtyathoopadeso Vamadevadivath.

The Lord says:

"Pranavartha Parignanaroopam thath Vistharahdaham Vadami Shad Vidharthaikyaparijnanena Suvratha Prathamo mantra roopasyath. Dwitheeyo yanthra Bhahvithaha Deva tharthaha Thru theeyartha Prapanchartho thatha param chathurtha Panchamorthasyath Gururoopa Pradarsakaha sashto sishyatma rooportho shadartha Pari keerthi thaha."

"I will in detail describe the meaning of Pranava in six ways or modes of interpretation. The 1st interpretation is Mantra; the 2nd interpretation is yanthra; the 3rd interpretation is Devatah; the 4th interpretation is prapancha; the 5th is Guru (teacher) and the 6th is Sishya (Disciple). These are the six interpretations for the Pranava.

Thathra mantra Swaroopam the Vadami muni saththama.—"Ahdyaswaro panchamascha Pavarganthasthathapara Bindu nahdowcha pancharnah Proktha Vedairnachanyatha Ethath samashtiroopohi Vedadissamudahruthaha Nadassarva samashti syath Bindvadyam yachathushtayam Vyashtiroopena samsiddham Pranave Siva Vachake.

Oh great Rishi, I will describe the nature of the Mantra. The primary sound A, the 5th sound U, then the last sound in the pavarga (labials) i.e. M and the bindu and Nada—these are denoted by the Vedas as constituents of Pranava. A combined form of these 5 sounds is called the source of Vedas. The Nada is called Samashtipranava of all the various component parts, while Bindu, M, U and A, are called Vyashtipranava of the Pranava which designates Siva."

Yanthra roopam srunu prahjna Siva Lingam Thadevahi Sarvadhasthath Likheth Peetam thadoordvam prathamam svaram uvarnamcha thadoordhvasitham Pavarganthan thadoordhvagam. Thanmastha kasthom Bindumcha thadoordhvam Nadamahlikheth. Evam yanthram samah likhya Pranavenaiva Veshtayeth. Taduth thenaiva Nahdena Bhindyahanadavasahnakam."

Oh wise one! listen to the form of the yanthra. That is only Siva-linga. At the bottom of all, the peeta must be written. above it should be written the first sound A, the letter U should be written above it. Then M should go above that; on the top of that the Bindu and above it should be written the Nada. Thus writing the yanthra it must be encompassed also with Pranava and must cleave it asunder by means of the previously described Nada. The figure thus formed will give Siva linga."

(*To be continued.*)

A. RENGASWAMI IYER,

Serpent Worship in India.

Of the numerous variety of objects that have struck the primitive Indian mind with a sense of awe-inspiring wonderment and led in time to active propitiation and worship, the serpent seems to have demanded a large attention. All worship grew out of fear and is born of man's terror of the great and mysterious natural agencies by which he is surrounded. We know the anthropomorphic tendency which seems innate in the human mind, in its dealings with the unknown has led the primitive Aryans to frequently personify the more obvious natural forces. Of these the most important is the Sun, the author of light and heat, which has been personified and deified under many names. In the Rig Veda we read of the Storm-myth, the Sun-And-Dawn-Myth etc., which led to the introduction of the gods Varuna, Surya, Indra, Agni and others. The worship of fire, sometimes allied to sun-worship, sometimes different from it represents the deification of another natural force. Similarly other objects in nature, grand, solemn and awe-inspiring such as large rivers, lofty mountains, deep springs, gigantic trees and frightful and dangerous animals have been reverenced and worshipped by primitive man mainly with a view to ensure his safety from the terrible evils they may inflict. It is thus the serpent in India seems to have come in for a share of the early Indian's worship. "The serpent tribe is perhaps more numerous in India than in any other country, and the most poisonous varieties seem to have congregated there. The openness of the dwellings imperatively demanded by the climate and the vast numbers of people sleeping in the open air, in groves, forests, gardens etc., give them chances of which they make but too good use, swarming in the gardens and seeking shelter in the houses during the rainy season. As a consequence death from snake-bite almost equals an epidemic." No wonder then the crude uncivilised Indian of the early ages was horrified at the sight of the venomous reptile and hastened to adopt the common resource then available, namely, of raising it to the dignity of a deity and propitiating it by the offering of prayer and sacrifices much in the same way in which the fire-god,

the sun-god and the storm-god were reverenced. It was thus the fear of the poisonous fang of the hooded snake that raised it to the level of the deity in the Indian mind and led the way for its introduction into his complex mythology and daily worship as well as into the shrines and temples of Hinduism.

The relics of this once powerful cult of serpent worship are found to exist at the present day in several parts of India, while the actual worship itself is still surviving in parts of the country among certain classes of people. Though it is hard to find now-a-days in the large and important towns and cities any sign of a festival exclusively devoted to the serpent, it is in small villages, hamlets and up-country places that we perceive the lingering worship in full force to-day. It is needless to say that every one would have observed an Indian village contain invariably a temple either big or small, a bathing ghat very often attached to the river or the village tank and a meeting place or village platform erected of stones and square in size with one or two sacred trees planted therein which keeps the platform shady throughout the day. These square platforms are found to exist sometimes near the temple, but invariably in the vicinity of the river or the tank. These platforms are the common unofficial meeting places and form an important factor in the Indian village life. For it is here that the village servants can find the headman in the mornings and take his directions, the ploughmen will find their land-lord, the village priests perform their morning and evening ablutions, and the village school-master airs his grievances. It is here also that the village scandal takes its birth and shape. In such a place, at the foot of the trees planted therein, you will invariably find number of stone images planted, some of them new and some worn out with age. The kindly ladies of the villages who go to the tank or river anoint these stones with oil and wash them with milk and water. If you examine what these stones represent you will find the image of serpents carved out in them, sometimes a single serpent—the deadly cobra with its hood fully expanded—and sometimes double serpents twisting together and serpents with five heads etc. Such stone images of serpents are by no means restricted to one place. These stones are also found at times single, but very often

collected together in large numbers, planted at the sides of the tanks and the stone steps of the bathing place in rivers. Wherever there is a pipal tree or a pipal and a morgossa, there also you are sure to find several stone images of serpents planted all round the trunk of the trees. Besides, at the entrance to every temple, on the stone pillars and walls, at the portico and in fact at every nook and corner of a Hindu shrine the images of serpents are to be seen. In the massive wooden cars belonging to these temples as well as in the several wooden *vahanas*, the serpent's image is found to be carved. Even in these isolated places the serpent receives its due honours of anointment and oblation.

It may be said that there are two different kinds of offering worship to the serpent. Although both of them are mainly directed towards one object—viz, the serpent, still in the aim of such worship as well as in the mode or manner of performing the worship they materially differ from one another. They are (1) the worship of the image of the serpent and (2) that of the live serpent. In the case of the worship of the image, the serpent is no longer considered as a fearful and awe-inspiring object, although it is certain that this form of worship might have been the natural development of ages of the adoration of the living reptile which must of course be the direct result of man's fear and horror towards it. It is well known how the conception of the deity as an all-powerful benign agency, ready to help and save mankind is altogether a later development in the evolution of the idea of God. The serpent is here regarded as the symbol of the creative power, the regenerative force—altogether a peaceful agency, due propitiation of which is necessary for man if he wants to be blessed with peace and plenty, with offsprings and their virtue. It is not known how the serpent came to be invested with such a conception, but it is certain that the idea has taken such a strong root in the Indian mind that matrons and maidens regard the serpent even to this day as a sacred object of worship to save them from the curse of barrenness.

The first kind of worship, therefore, finds great favour with the gentler sex. Wherever the images of serpents are found, near the tanks, rivers and the temples, troops of beautiful maidens can be

seen in the mornings after their bath, pouring water over the images, washing them with milk and presenting the usual offerings of cocoanut etc. They are enjoined to continue the worship for a period of 40 days. Every day they are to go round the images as well as the trees under which they are placed a certain fixed number of times with flowers in their hands which they drop one by one before or on the image, each time they complete one round. It is devoutly believed that the result of the worship will be the presentation of an offspring within another year. And if by chance any lady is blessed with a child, she immediately takes care to set up a stone image of a serpent and thus adds one more to the already existing number of images. The same worship has been gradually developed into an important sacrifice and a complicated system of rites with authorised rules (mantras) has grown round it. The *Nagapuja*, as it is called, has received holy sanction and is now performed in lieu of the Aswamedha and the Puthrakameshti of the vedic period. A golden image of the hooded cobra, as the king of the serpents, is fashioned, offerings are made to it by both the husband and the wife in strict accordance with the rules, under the supervision of a sanskrit priest, and finally when the ceremony is over the golden image is presented to the priest. This puja is likewise performed with the same object of obtaining children; but being more costly in its nature generally obtains only among the more wealthy classes.

The other kind of snake worship in which the living serpent is adored persists even at this date and is comparatively rarer in the Southern parts of India than the Northern. It is found to exist all over the West Coast and especially in Malabar. 'They (the Nagas,)' says Zenaide A. Ragozin, in his *Vedic India*, "play an important part, too, in modern Hinduism, which has instituted a yearly festival in honour, not of mythical serpents, but of the real, live snakes, which do not appear to strike this apathetic people with a loathing and terror at all proportionate to the havoc they play with human life. This festival, which comes round towards the end of July, is of a decidedly propitiatory character. Pilgrims flock to the Naga-shrines which abound in certain districts; the cities teem with

snake-charmers, whose weird charges eagerly crawl around the pans with milk placed at intervals on the ground in all the principal thoroughfares, before the admiring eyes of a devout and festive throng." In some parts, the earthern mounds and holes which form the usual habitations of these venomous creatures are sought for and offerings like milk, eggs, fresh-killed chicken, rats and animal blood are left near their mouths so that their crawling inmates may satisfy their appetite in leisure. This kind of propitiation is certainly the outcome of horror for the envenomed double-tongued reptile. It is also said that in certain old houses and dwellings there are to be found snakes—often cobras—and the inhabitants regard them in the light of guardian angels and would not molest them for all the world, but would worship and reverence them in the same manner believing the safety and weal of the family to depend upon those of the household-snake (மனைப்பாம்பு). It is also believed that the cobra is the highest class of the serpent and is called the Brahmin serpent and as such is regarded as incapable of inflicting any wanton injury upon others.

There are certain curious stories of snakes found current in the folk-lore of the country. Aged snakes of a certain variety are supposed to contain in their heads a priceless gem of dazzling brilliancy called the *Nagaratna* which is endowed with several virtues. The serpent is represented as leaving it on the ground and searching its prey in the light thrown out by the gem and again swallowing it back. Several legends and adventures have grown round this philosopher's stone and the attempts to discover and take possession of it. Holy temples and sacred shrines are supposed to be the habitation of some virtuous serpent and it would be amounting to sacrilege to attempt to kill or remove them, as the holiness of the temple is attributed to the presence of the monster. Again they are represented as exhibiting a motherly tenderness and solicitude towards the orphan children cast away in the forest and bringing them up with an incredible amount of care and kindness. Thus, one folk-song speaks of the beneficent hood that screens the countenance of the forlorn infant from the heat of the sun and another makes mention of the babe fed by milk procured by the wood-serpent and lulled to sleep by its sweet lullaby. There have

been several heroes and demi-gods figuring in the annals of the country thus miraculously brought up in their infancy. But, though a great deal should be dismissed as mere poetic imagery and idle fancy, yet there is no doubt that a glimpse is obtained into the attitude of the people who came to regard the serpent as an emblem of kindness and beneficence.

There is one more point to be considered in connection with the serpent in India and it is the examination of the origin of the adoration of the venomous reptile with reference to the early races that settled in India. The interesting question whether the serpent was primarily the symbol of the Aryan or Dravidian races is discussed by Zenaide A. Ragozin in his *Vedic India* and the following extract from his valuable work will be read with interest. "The most essential feature of it (Dravidian religion) is the worship of the Earth, in the form of both god and goddess, as the giver and maintainer of life, and the adoration of the snake as the Earth-god's special emblem. The snake-god or king of snakes is the wise and gigantic serpent *Shesh*—a name which casts a singularly vivid side-light on one of the many puzzles with which the Rig Veda still teems. In several of those passages in which the priestly poets exhaust their ingenuity inventing abusive epithets for their Dasyu foes, they call them with scathing contempt, *Shishna-devas*, literally: 'whose God is Shishna or Shesh.' The inference suggests itself almost irresistibly, and moreover leads us to suspect that many a passage wherein serpents and dragon-monsters are mentioned, may have a more direct and realistic meaning than was hitherto supposed. Thus, with regard to the ever-recurring battle between Indra and Ahi, 'the serpent,' invariably ending with the Aryan champion-god's victory, we cannot help asking ourselves: have we really *always* to do with a nature-myth? is the battle only an incident of the atmospheric drama and is the Serpent always and inevitably a cloud-serpent? By the light of later ethnological studies, another and even simpler interpretation lies temptingly near: may not the serpent sometimes personate the serpent-god of the snake-worshippers—the *Shishna-devas*—and the battle between the Aryan champion-god and the Dasyu sacred emblem thus resolve itself into a poetical version of the long race-strife? It is certain, at all events, that, in the

enthusiasm and novelty of recent discovery, the mythical interpretation has been greatly overdone, and just as the word 'Dasyu' which was at first declared to designate only the demons (of darkness, drought or winter) whom the bright *devas* fought is proved to apply quite as often to earthly human foes; so the cloud-serpent of the uncompromising myth theory may very well turn out to be, quite frequently, an allegorical presentation of the object of those foes' superstitious adoration. * * * Be that as it may, it is certain that snake-worship, utterly un-Aryan as it is, made a profound impression on the white invaders, so much so, that in the course of time, an Aryan snake-god—Ariaka—was invented; an impression plainly discernible, too, in the prominent place given to the Nagas (snakes and snake-people, half human, half serpentine in form and possessed of supernatural wisdom) in the later classical poetry." From this it is clear that the author of *Vedic India* would have us believe that the serpent is primarily the Dravidian symbol and that the Aryans only borrowed it. In another place also he says that, "it is worthy of notice: Ist that temples dedicated to serpents are not found in the North of India; 2nd that the priests of such temples are never Brahmans, but belong to the lowest castes. Indeed the old Aryan spirit is so much alive still in the noble castes that they hold the serpent to be of evil omen and a Brahman if he happens to see one in the morning, will give up for that day whatever work or errand he may have on hand."

Before proceeding to examine the reasonableness or otherwise of this theory of Mr. Ragozin's, we shall see what is the position accorded to the serpent in the mythologies, puranas, classical and maedieval literatures of both the races—Aryan and Dravidian. In the Aryan cosmogony as sketched out in the several puranas it is explained that the earth is borne on the head of an immense serpent called *Adisesha* and the phenomenon of earthquake is attributed to the bearer of the universe changing shoulders. Next in the myth relating to the *Kurma* avatar of Vishnu—decidedly an Aryan story—the serpent Vasuki is said to have lent its services for the churning of the Amrita. Again in the story of Siva's destruction of Tiripura it is likewise a serpent that served him as the string for his bow. In these three ancient myths which are unques-

tionably of Aryan origin, the serpent plays no mean part,—in fact but for its help the Aryan Gods themselves would have been powerless. In later times the snake becomes the important ornament of God Siva and is elevated to the inseparable companionship of the deity. It is also associated with the phallic emblem of linga under which that god is worshipped. The parallel holds good in Vaishnavism also, and the serpent serves as mattress for Vishnu. The ceremony called *Nagapuja* which we have already described is essentially an Aryan ceremony as it finds a place among Aryan rites and the rules prescribed for its performance form part of the Sanskrit *mantras*. *The Great War* tells us that the serpent was the emblem of one of the most powerful races of kings in the North of India called the Kurus and their representative, Duriyodana, appears in battle with the sign of the snake in his flag. Who were the Nagas ? One of the rishis, Kasyapa married two sisters. The elder Kadru became the mother of a thousand Nagas (snakes). Were these Dravidians and their story of Dravidian origin ? In later Sanskrit literature the snake appears again (cf. *Nagananda*) and we perceive none of the so called loathsomeness of the Aryans towards the reptile. In fact, at every stage of development of Aryan religion, mythology and literature the serpent is nowhere forgotten, but is assigned a clear and correspondingly important position which becomes more and more difficult to ignore.

On the other hand, early Dravidian literature which was assiduously cultivated in the South, independent of Aryan influence, for centuries before even Sanskrit attained to any literary grace (as is now fully believed by numerous oriental scholars and Philologists) does not contain any mention of the serpent whatever, either favourable or unfavourable. In fact the serpent is conspicuous by its absence from early Dravidian annals. The religion and forms of worship that obtain at present among the Dravidian races as well as the mythology now current among them are not of indigenous growth, but wholly borrowed from the Aryans: and consequently it is useless to expect to glean anything from them as regards the Dravidian's attitude towards the serpent. The early Dravidian gods mentioned in their literature are Muruga and Rudra, the former, their favourite war-god and the latter, as supposed by

some, their "terrible storm-god." The serpent is nowhere mentioned as an accessory to these gods, unlike the Aryan Siva and Vishnu: nor is any mention found of independent serpent worship. Even the relics of demon worship, now found here and there, which are in all probability, the surviving remains of Dravidian barbarism, do not give a place to the adoration of the serpent in any form, either alive or its image. The powerful Dravidian Sovereigns who established independent kingdoms in the South—namely the Pandyas, the Cholas and the Cheras—had none of them the serpent as their royal emblem. The Fish and the Tiger were the celebrated emblems of the pure Dravidian kings and it would be more reasonable and appropriate to regard the Fish as the sacred and venerated emblem of the whole Dravidian race instead of the serpent. If the Dravidians were Earth-worshippers and if the serpent were regarded by them as the symbol of the earth, as Mr. Ragozin represents, would it be possible to conceive that one and all of the numerous branches of the Dravidian stock neglected the serpent and even ignored it from their religion, worship, literature and regal emblem?

How then does Mr. Ragozin seem to be so very positive in holding that serpent worship is essentially a Dravidian feature? In the midst of over-whelming evidences as to the gradual growth of the importance of the serpent in Aryan religion, mythology and literature and in the absence of any mention whatever of the serpent in the Dravidian records, it is more than difficult to believe that the learned author of the *Vedic India* may be altogether right in his conclusions. The fact seems to be that the writer perceived a number of evidences jointly conclusive of an early connection having existed between the Dravidians of India and the Shumiro-Accads of the first Babylonian empire—connections for the most part of maritime intercourse, established and strengthened by subsequent discoveries in the fields of Philology and Craniology. And hence in his anxiety and enthusiasm to find other traces of connection and supply the missing links he imposed the serpent-worship upon the Dravidians and thus managed to discover one more strong evidence of an early Dravido-Accadian connection.

He has nowhere tried to prove that the Dravidians regarded the serpent sacred as an emblem of the Earth; but has merely assumed that, in as much as other evidences point unmistakably towards an early connection having existed between the two races, the most sacred symbol of the Accadians must also be taken as such of the early Dravidians. Accordingly he writes: "But even more convincing is the common sacred symbol—the serpent, the emblem of the worship of Earth, with its mystery, its wealth and its forces. The Accadian supreme god Ea was worshipped at his holiest shrine at Eridhu under the form of a serpent and as Eridhu was the centre form which the first Chaldean civilisation started and spread, so the serpent-symbol was accepted as that of the race and its religion." This only goes to prove that the serpent was regarded as a sacred symbol by the Shumiro-Accads, but does not help us to saddle the very symbol upon the Dravidians, who, as shown above, only seem to have borrowed, late in their social development, the worship of the serpent from their Aryan conquerors along with their religion, social systems, sacrifices and ceremonies.

But the most important point in Mr. Ragozin's argument is the frequent mention in the Rig Veda, of names denoting serpents used by the early Aryans as invectives and epithets of abuse levelled against their Dasyu foes. Numerous battles are mentioned as having taken place between the Aryan gods—notably Indra—and the serpent, invariably terminating with the Aryan god's victory. As the Dasyus and the serpent are mentioned in the same breath, the writer easily takes the latter to be the god,—symbol or emblem—of the former and accordingly interprets one such epithet, *Shishna-devas*, to mean 'whose god is the serpent.' And the whole thing is invested with a garb of allegorical presentation so as to suit the general conclusion, his comfortable inference, that the Dasyus were the Dravidians, the serpent, their god, and that the symbol, as a figure of speech, stands for the worshippers. It must be confessed that it is impossible to conceive of a more ingenious interpretation which is farther from the truth and which lands us at once on a region of insurmountable difficulties. First of all, if the early Aryans regarded the serpent with a feeling of loathsome abhorrence, as represented

above, how comes it then that the very object of their loathsomeness is given an important place in their cosmogony, religion and Puranas and raised to the status of an important functionary and a sacred attribute of their gods through all the stages of the development of their faith? If the Aryans borrowed the serpent and its worship from the Dravidians, surely it is inconceivable how the repulsive and uncanny reptile and one of their foes, once the object of their hatred, could have been elevated to a place of honour and reverence as a holy object. These difficulties can never be satisfactorily explained so long as we accept Mr. Ragozin's explanation. Besides, he has failed to establish the correctness of his interpretation—namely that the Dasyus were Snake worshippers—by not referring to any passage in the Rig Veda where the rites of the Dasyus are explicitly set forth or any acount is given of their propititian of the serpent. In the absence of any such confirmatory evidence it is difficult to agree with the author of the *Vedic India* as regards the origin of snake-worship in India. But, is no simpler and easier explanation possible? The Aryans in their advance into the Punjab encountered two different kinds of foes. They had to fight their way equally with the Dasyus and the serpents. The Dasyus attacked them and checked their progress at every step, while the venomous reptiles molested them and carried death into their camps. They had to fight for the land with the one and for security with the other. So they engaged in a strife with the both. With the Dasyus they fought as well as their gods fought. They routed and subjected them and in time even absorbed them into their own fold. But with the serpent they had no longer to deal with a human enemy, and neither intimidation nor coercion neither absorbtion nor conquest was possible. First they invoked their gods and requested them to fight the serpent-foes. There are accounts in the Rig of the Aryan-god's battle with the serpent-god—*Shishna-deva*—and the triumphs of the former, just as there are accounts of their conflicts with the Dasyus and their victories. In the one case the Aryans fought with human foes; while in the other the Aryan-gods battled, not with mere reptiles (serpents)—for it would be derogatory for gods to engage in strife with mere reptiles—but with the gods of the

serpents, an idea perfectly natural to the Aryan mind that makes gods of the elements, the sun, the moon and other natural forces. But they soon perceived that there would be practically no end of their strife with these foes and that they would have to contend with them as long as they stayed in the country. They fought with them and found their trouble was not over. The only other alternative left to them was to approach them, not with arms and weapons, but with prayers and sacrifices and accordingly a place was given to them in their pantheon. The serpents were observed to issue forth from holes in the earth and it was thought that the interior of the earth must be their abode where a big serpent—the god of all serpents—must reside. Hence the serpent was easily made the symbol of the Earth. They further thought that, as the earth was flat, the lower world, the nether region, should be peopled by serpents and that the earth itself be balanced on the head of a monster serpent. Thus in the Aryan cosmogony Adi-Sesha,—the serpent-god, came to have a distinct place. This simpler explanation seems to us to explain the facts more easily and fully and does not lead us to find impossible allegories and figures of speech in the narratives of a primitive folk. There is no doubt the importance of adoring the serpent, which had its beginnings in the feelings of fear and horror in the Aryan mind and in the primitive instinct of self preservation was thus recognised and the serpent was inseparably bound up with the growth of Hinduism in all the stages of which we find it occupying places of growing pre-eminence and importance.

The other difficulties raised by the same writer, viz., that temples dedicated to serpents are not found in the North of India and that the priests of such temples are never Brahmans but belong to the lower castes, are not of great consequence as they are merely of a negative character. First, we doubt if there are anywhere in India, temples as such, specially dedicated to the serpent. In fact stone images of serpents are found all over India wherever there is a Hindu temple, Sivite or Vaishnavite. And the worship of these images, especially by the gentler sex, obtains throughout the whole of this ancient land, irrespective of the caste or creed of the

votaries. The worship of the live serpent is found to exist with full force even to-day in parts of the Bombay Presidency and in Malabar in Southern India. In the latter country, every household has its sacred mound—the abode of serpents—and the propitiation of the reptile with the offerings of milk and broth is celebrated with great fervour and reverence. And when we remember the story of the reclamation of Malabar by Parasurama and the amount of Aryan influence that was brought to bear upon the country and its people, we can easily understand how the curious worship still survives there. Priests are nowhere employed for worshipping the serpent except in the ceremony called *Nagapuja* in which only an Aryan priest can officiate and repeat the Sanskrit mantras. Lastly, the superstitious dread of the serpent as an evil omen is shared alike by all classes of people in India and cannot easily be assigned to the credit of any one race, Aryan or Dravidian. It is therefore almost impossible, with the weight of a long array of evidences to the contrary and with unmistakable traces of the growing importance of the serpent recognised by the early Aryans and with the total absence of its mention in early Dravidian records, to accept the conclusion of the author of *Vedic India*, that the serpent was the sacred symbol of the Dravidians and its worship was adopted by the Aryans. And if our discourse tends to make anything clear, it is quite the contrary.

Such then in brief outline is the origin and development of serpent worship in India. But the adoration of the serpent was by no means restricted to the Indian continent. In the early ages, every nation in every part of the globe seem to have devoted their attention to this curious reptile-worship. "The Japanese who formerly reverenced the water-snake as a god, have traditions of the Creator appearing to man in the shape of a serpent. The Ophites, a sect of the Gnostics, styled themselves Naaseni, or 'Followers of the serpent;' and it is stated that they kept a tame serpent in a chest or sacred ark, out of which it was induced to emerge during the celebration of their mystic rites. The temples of Æsculapius at Alexandria and at Epidaurus had each a living serpent, carefully tended by the temple devotees. This was the

Agathodaemon or 'good genius' of Egyptian worship and it is supposed to have been the hooded snake. 'The ancient Agathodæmon, in the form of his congener the cobra, still haunts the precincts of the Hindu temples, as of old the shrines of Isis, and issues from his hole at the sound of a fife to accept the oblation of milk from the attendant priest' (Kings *Gnostics*, p. 218). The sacred snake was also conspicuous in the Greek mysteries. Serpentine emblems occur repeatedly in the early art of W. Europe, and the snake is a prominent feature of European mythology. The worship of the snake has long been a characteristic of the religious rites of the North American Indians."*

M. JIVA RATNAM.

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* Harmsworth Encyclopædia.